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Congress of the United States
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ON COMPETITION BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES AND THE
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

December 11, 2023

To the Leaders of New Jersey's Higher Education Institutions:

In the two months since the terrorist attack committed by Hamas on October 7, we have seen a dramatic increase in antisemitic incidents across the country. The problem is particularly acute on college campuses, where Jewish students report feeling targeted by faculty and their fellow students, being threatened verbally and physically by student activists, and harassed with hurtful antisemitic tropes.

Last week, your colleagues—the presidents of Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Pennsylvania—testified before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. They were invited to discuss their efforts to confront antisemitism on their campuses.

These leaders had an excellent opportunity to make clear that our nation's higher education institutions do not tolerate antisemitism or hatred of any kind, and to communicate their support for their students. Stunningly, they did not avail themselves of that opportunity. Instead, the presidents gave technical answers that were deeply disappointing and unsatisfactory, both from a policy perspective and from the perspectives of many of the Jewish members of their communities.

The issues surrounding the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians are complex, nuanced, and fraught with emotion. I share university leaders' deep commitment to the freedoms of speech and assembly for their students, and I understand that there are multiple factors that inform university policies regarding speech and expression on campus. However, on this issue, there is very little ambiguity: Antisemitism is hatred, without exception; threats of genocide against Jews are violent, no matter the context; and it was disturbing to see these leaders equivocate on their responses.

College is, and should be, a place of fierce and spirited exchanges of ideas. It should be a place where worldviews are informed, good citizens are shaped, and students learn to engage with those with whom they disagree. It should not—must not—be a place where students are afraid to be themselves for fear of harassment, where they are targeted for their ethnicity, their gender, or their religion, and it must not be a place where the free exchange of ideas is crushed by the loudest voice in the room. Hate speech of any stripe has no place at our universities. It is not only possible but imperative for leaders like you to promote the intellectual and ideological development of their students, while also ensuring their students' safety.

As the leaders of New Jersey's institutions of higher education, you have an awesome responsibility. You are creating the leaders of the future, the individuals who will shape our country in the years to come. At a time like this, when Jewish students and Muslim students alike are afraid for their safety, it is more important than ever that you stand up with the strong message—hatred has no place on a college campus.

As a Member of Congress, I hear daily from parents who are concerned about the wellbeing of their college-age children. As a mother of a soon-to-be college freshman, I share their concerns. So, I ask you: What is your institution doing to ensure your students are free from harassment and bullying on campus? How do you ensure hate speech does not dissuade free speech in your public squares? And how do you ensure a free exchange of ideas without sowing division?

I stand ready to work with you in any way I can, to ensure that New Jersey's universities reflect New Jersey's values—to reject hatred, promote diversity and inclusion, and stand with our friends, neighbors, and loved ones during this challenging time.

Sincerely,



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress

cc: New Jersey Higher Education Institutions

- Atlantic Cape Community College
- Bergen Community College
- Brookdale Community College
- Caldwell University
- Camden County College
- Centenary University
- The College of New Jersey
- County College of Morris
- Cumberland County College
- Drew University
- Essex County College

- Fairleigh Dickinson University
- Felician University
- Georgian Court University
- Hudson County Community College
- Kean University
- Mercer County Community College
- Middlesex County College
- Monmouth University
- Montclair State University
- New Jersey City University
- New Jersey Institute of Technology
- Ocean County College
- Passaic County Community College
- Princeton University
- Ramapo College of New Jersey
- Raritan Valley Community College
- Rider University
- Rowan College at Burlington County
- Rowan College of South Jersey
- Rowan University
- Rutgers University
- Saint Elizabeth University
- Saint Peter's University
- Salem Community College
- Seton Hall University
- Stevens Institute of Technology
- Stockton University
- Sussex County Community College
- Thomas Edison State University
- Union County College
- Warren County Community College
- William Paterson University